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ABSTRACT

This practicum report addressed the problem of role ambiguity in regard to effective utilization of special education staff within the regular fourth grade classroom and the need for support for the regular teacher working with special education students. The researcher, a special educator, conducted the following activities: (1) presented an inservice training to staff on integration strategies, (2) modeled desired strategies during a 2-week mini-unit in social studies, (3) collaborated in providing shared instruction in a math unit, and (4) switched roles with a regular educator for two full consecutive days. Outcomes included: teachers increased acceptance and understanding of integration as evidenced by pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys; a decrease in the numbers of questions about integration posed by staff and an increase in the numbers of positive comments; the targeting of specific areas for improvement as a result of staff discussions; and improved perceptions of support by the regular class teachers. Appendices include the integration assessment surveys and results, a teacher questionnaire, and a model for effective utilization of special education staff in the regular classroom. (Contains 31 references.) (DB)

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Defining Staff Roles and Responsibilities with Integration: A Model for Effective Utilization of Special Education Staff in the Regular Classroom

by

Vicky A. Gallagher

Cluster 43

A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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Approved:

October 5, 1992

Date of Final Approval of Report

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ABSTRACT

Defining Staff Roles and Responsibilities with Integration: A Model for Effective Utilization of Special Education Staff in the Regular Classroom. Gallagher, Vicky A., 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Educational Practices/Elementary Education/Interdisciplinary Approach/Literature Reviews/ Mainstreaming/Special Education/Teacher Role

The problem in the writer's work setting was role ambiguity with regard to effective utilization of special education staff within the regular classroom and inadequate classroom support for the regular teacher working with special education students. The goal of the writer was that all staff members involved would be able to clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities, understand the rationale for integrated services, and be more comfortable with integration.

The solution strategy selected involved assessment of integration practices, exploration and modeling of various collaborative teaching arrangements and the development of a model for effective utilization of staff to provide additional support facilitating integration.

A model was developed which describes staff roles and responsibilities in the integration of special education students. Staff involved demonstrated increased acceptance and improved understanding of integration efforts, an increased awareness of the rationale for integrated services, and targeted areas for further improvement.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The work setting was an elementary school in a small, suburban community in the northeast. Once a sparsely populated agricultural community, proximity to major cities was a factor in the transformation to a mostly residential area. The 22,000 member community was predominantly caucasian with no significant minority population. The community, generally considered upper middle class, was increasingly experiencing severe budget deficits and the effects of rising regional unemployment.

There was subsidized housing in the community for some 400 low income families, but most community members lived in neighborhoods of single family homes on tree lined streets. According to the 1990 Census of Population and Housing (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1991), the median value of owner occupied homes was $231,300 in this community.

Many residents were employed in service industries or in technical fields. Recently, there had been substantial layoffs in defense industries and in technical fields in the region which no doubt impacted some community members.

The community is the home of a small, private, liberal arts college and several parochial schools. The local public school system included four elementary schools, one early childhood education center, one middle school and one comprehensive high school. Approximately 3,700 students were enrolled in the school system.

Summer school programs, enrichment programs and extracurricular sports were enjoyed by many students. After graduation, 85% or more of the students go on to institutions of higher education. Before and after school child care was available in the schools. Chapter 1 services were provided in math in the elementary schools. Special education services were provided in every school. Consistent with surrounding communities, approximately 12% of the school population received special education services. Approximately 5% of students were eligible for free or reduced lunches.

This school system was experiencing increased enrollment in the elementary grades and decreased enrollment at the upper grades. Physical space for instruction was at a premium. There were several portable classroom units in use. Plans for construction of a new elementary school were held in limbo by severe budget limitations imposed by the community. The system laid off 25% of total teaching staff at the close of the 1990-1991 school year due to budget deficits. Combined with the fact that there had been

notable administrative changes in the last five years. It was clear that this school system was in a critical transition period.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The work setting of the writer was an elementary school with an enrollment of approximately 400 students in grades one through five. The two-story brick building was approaching it's 30th birthday, and was originally constructed as a junior high school. It was later converted to elementary use. The school provided Chapter 1 services in math. Remedial reading and special education services were available for students with demonstrated needs. Approximately 13% of the students received special education services. Some 9% of students qualified for free or reduced lunches in the school cafeteria.

The professional staff in the building included a principal, teaching assistant principal, and 14 regular education teachers. Additionally there were itinerant services provided in music, art, library sciences and physical education. There were three special education teachers and three full-time special education instructional aides assigned to this school. A part-time guidance counselor served as chairperson of the Student Assistance Team and was available for students. (The Student

-ssistance Team is a multidisciplinary group charged with identifying modifications or classroom interventions which may assist students experiencing difficulties.) The population specifically involved in this practicum project were three regular education teachers, one special education teacher, and one special education instructional aide.

The writer is a special education teacher with a caseload of sixteen, fourth grade students with mild to moderate special needs. The students had varied needs including learning disabilities and behavioral/emotional needs. The writer worked with three fourth grade teachers and was charged with managing the program and providing direct services to students. Services were to be provided in the regular classroom as much as possible. In this endeavor, a special education instructional aide worked under the direction and supervision of the writer.

The writer has 16 years of experience instructing special students having taught learning disabled, developmentally delayed, behaviorally and emotionally handicapped students. The writer's undergraduate degree is in special education with training in learning disabilities, developmental delays, and emotional handicaps. The writer has a master's degree in education technology with a specialization in special needs. The writer is currently studying at the doctoral level, having recently completed educational leadership and program evaluation components.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Scholars in the field of special education have debated the most appropriate methods, materials and location of services since the inception of Public Law 94-142, later reauthorized in Public Law 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the discussion continues today. Regarding location though, the intent of the law is clear. Students with special needs are to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Trends in special education indicate varying interpretations of this mandate over time. Pull-out service delivery models predominated for many years, followed by increased mainstreaming. The perspective of time has contributed to the most recent practices of more widespread inclusion, often referred to as integration of special students.

The model of special education service delivery in the writer's community has reflected trends in the field. Similar to many other school systems, special education services have changed over the past several years. The original pull-out programs were specific to handicapping conditions and many students were tuitioned out to private

settings. Collaborative programs were designed next, wherein neighboring communities could share resources to educate special students. Low incidence exceptionalities were cost effectively managed in this fashion within the public school realm. The concept of mainstreaming and non-categorical services followed. The labeling of student handicaps was discouraged, more generic programs were designed and increased involvement in the regular classroom was sought. In recent years with declining financial resources, efforts were increased to bring back students that were serviced in private settings. In the writer's work setting, there was a need to develop a model to optimally use existing special education staff within the regular classroom to meet student needs.

The writer provided services for intermediate students with behavioral difficulties from 1986 through 1990 in a substantially separate resource room program. Some limited mainstreaming of these students was managed. In 1990, the Superintendent initiated a policy of increased integration. In September 1991, there were significant program changes. In accordance with a systemwide goal of integration, students with special needs were assigned to regular classrooms and categorical resource room programs were eliminated in the writer's work setting.

Many difficulties were being encountered as essentially all special students and special education staff were

integrated into regular classrooms. Physical integration had been accomplished. Special education students were being serviced in the regular classroom with their nondisabled peers. Ideally, special education staff members would collaborate with regular education staff members and they would jointly plan and deliver a program for special education students. In actual fact, roles and responsibilities were not clearly defined for staff members in this new joint venture. A determination of the best way to provide support for regular teachers was critical if special students were to be successful in this new setting.

Briefly, a survey of staff indicated there was role ambiguity with regard to effective utilization of special education staff within the regular classroom and inadequate classroom support for the regular teacher working with special education students.

Problem Documentation

Evidence of the problem was supported by surveys, observations, and a formal grievance. Teachers indicated numerous concerns about current integration practices, including role responsibilities and classroom support, in a survey administered to all staff in January 1992. The survey, included as Appendix A, was designed by the writer to gather feedback from staff members. Statements about

integration of special students were listed and respondents indicated their agreement or disagreement on a Likert-type scale. Additionally, respondents were asked to comment on strengths and weaknesses of current integration efforts.

Nearly all of the staff in the writer's work setting completed the survey yielding a 97% return rate. A mean score was tabulated for each item. Insufficient planning time with special education staff and inadequate support for staff members with special students were notable results indicated on this portion of the survey. Similarly, a mediocre response to the survey statement, "I feel more comfortable having special students in my class this year" provided little testament to the effectiveness and acceptance of integration efforts to date. Results from the statement portion of the survey are reported in full in Table 1.

Trends in comments written on the survey about strengths and weaknesses were assessed by a committee of parents and the writer. Similar statements were combined and a summary of comments was compiled.

Table 1

INTEGRATION ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS, JANUARY 1992

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	AVERAGE SCORE
1. The integration of special students has been a positive change in the classroom this year.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.58
2. There has been increased collaboration among regular and special needs staff members.	1....2....3.*..4....5		3.44
3. There has been sufficient planning time with special needs staff members.	1...*2....3....4....5		1.88
4. Special students seem to be accepted by their peers.	1....2....3....4*...5		4.08
5. I have learned a new approach or teaching strategy from a colleague this year.	1....2....3*...4....5		3.09
6. I am more aware of the needs of my special students this year.	1....2....3*...4....5		3.18
7. I feel more comfortable having special students in my class this year.	1....2....3*...4....5		3.12
8. I have adequate contact with the parents of my special students.	1....2....3.*..4....5		3.38
9. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for classwork of special students as needed.	1....2....3.*..4....5		3.27
10. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for tests as needed.	1....2....3*...4....5		3.22
11. Behavior problems have increased this year with integration of special students.	1....2*...3....4....5		2.10
12. The general pace of instruction seems to be slower with integration of special students.	1....2....*....4....5		3.00
13. There is a lot more work for staff members who have special students.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.61
14. There is adequate support for staff members with special students.	1....2...*3....4....5		2.67
15. I would welcome special students into my class next year.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.50
16. I would welcome special needs staff members into my class next year.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.67
17. All students belong in the regular classroom with their peers.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.52
18. Scheduling has been more difficult this year with the integration of special students.	1....2..*.3....4....5		2.57
19. My regular students have benefitted from integration of special needs staff members.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.55
20. I have grown professionally as a result of collaboration with my colleagues this year.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.50

Note. Asterisks (*) are used to plot mean score for total respondents.

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The three most frequently cited comments in each category are reported in Table 2. A complete listing of comments is included in Appendix B. It is notable that there were 32 comments written about strengths and 58 comments about weaknesses regarding integration efforts: nearly twice as many comments dealt with weaknesses. Comments are consistent with results noted in the initial portion of the survey.

Table 2

Integration Assessment Results, January 1992:
Most Frequently Cited Comments

Strengths

# Times Cited	Comment
4	There is increased help in the classroom.
4	There are social benefits for SPED students.
4	Integration is important.

Weaknesses

# Times Cited	Comment
8	There are insufficient staff resources to provide support for integration.
6	Joint planning time between SPED staff and Non-SPED staff is insufficient.
6	Staff feel unprepared to work with SPED students.

The survey results provided hard data about teacher perceptions regarding integration and were valuable as baseline data with which to evaluate progress in the future. Combined survey results seemed to indicate weak acceptance and understanding of integration efforts to date.

The writer also observed that there had been concerns and questions about integration at every staff meeting to date during the 1991-1992 school year. This observation provided additional evidence that a problem existed in the writer's work setting. Staff members had questions about their roles and responsibilities and how to proceed with integration of special students. They were genuinely concerned and consistently raised questions seeking guidance and support.

Assessment of integration efforts was chosen as a goal for the school by a joint committee of parents, teachers, and administrators. The issue of integration was an important one to all these constituency groups. While many educational programs are routinely evaluated, it is the writer's belief that assessment of integration was chosen as a goal because it was of concern. The writer volunteered to serve on the Building Goals Committee, subcommittee charged with evaluating progress in the integration of special students. The writer was the only teacher on the assessment subcommittee. The writer designed the survey used to assess integration efforts and collaborated with three parents on the subcommittee to compile the results.

Finally, evidence of the problem was documented in a grievance filed by the teachers' union regarding ambiguities and process difficulties involved in the integration of special needs students. The teachers' union maintained that integration of special students into the regular classroom constituted a significant change in working conditions in the school system. The union maintained there had been insufficient preparation and planning for integration. The class action grievance did not specifically cite difficulties in the writer's school, but rather served as evidence of procedures and practices which were ambiguous and of general concern to many professionals in this school system. In a compromise, the grievance was not being pursued actively by the teachers' union at the time of writing. The Superintendent had shown good faith in demonstrating efforts to rectify specific problems in the schools. The union will continue to monitor integration practices though and reserved the right to pursue the grievance if warranted in the future.

Causative Analysis

It is the writer's belief that there were three major causes of the problem. There were procedural causes of the problem. With the prospect of integration imminent, planning was undertaken in the spring of 1991. Release time for planning was not provided, so special education staff

members conducted meetings with grade level teams after school. Numbers of special students were projected for the 1991-1992 school year and existing staff resources were allocated on that basis; however, role responsibilities were not clearly delineated during the planning process prior to integration of special students. Similarly, specific student needs and expectations were not clearly delineated during the planning process.

There were people or attitude causes of the problem. Change is difficult and there is often resistance to change. There had been significant resistance to this major change in service delivery in the writer's work setting. During the planning process, some regular education staff members frankly stated that they were uncomfortable with other adults in their classrooms and requested not to be involved with integration. Most staff members exhibited a more moderate position, but some staff members did not seem invested in integration and questioned the practice as beneficial for both special needs and regular students. These staff members did not seem to have an understanding of the rationale behind integration and the potential benefits for all students.

There were training causes of the problem also. There was no training of regular education staff members to facilitate integration. A small number of staff members attended a workshop which provided an overview of the basic concept of integration. This limited exposure was never

supplemented with training in specific methods and procedures which may have positively impacted integration. Similarly, there was no training for special education staff members to facilitate integration of special students. Special education staff members were presumed to have the ability to successfully implement programs in the regular classroom with their peers.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Many other professionals have written about problems associated with the integration of special students into the regular classroom. A substantial body of recent research deals with this issue. In a deliberate effort to stimulate discussion and research in the educational community, J. R. Jenkins, Pious and Jewell (1990) reviewed the literature pertaining to what has come to be known as the Regular Education Initiative (REI). These authors note that the REI calls for a partnership of regular education and special education professionals to meet the needs of all low-achieving students within the regular classroom. The authors maintain that while the premise of collaboration is a logical response to demonstrated deficits in traditional special education systems, the REI is not well defined. Exactly how to proceed in this partnership remains a question.

Larrivee and Horne (1991) purport that the problems associated with integration of handicapped students go well beyond physical placement. In a study of the social status of mainstreamed students, they discuss the importance of the learning environment in the regular classroom. The role of the teacher is critical. They report that teacher response to students and the amount of time actively involved in specific learning tasks in the classroom, largely determines the social acceptance of mainstreamed students. These authors maintain that we must look at the learning environment and classroom interactions to facilitate integration of special students.

Similarly, J. R. Jenkins, Jewell, Leicester, L. Jenkins and Troutner (1991) note the importance of determining an effective model for integrating low-achieving students. They conducted a study field-testing three intervention models: cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and in-class services from specialists. Their results indicate that without clearly defined roles and responsibilities these interventions are only marginally effective.

Clearly, much research supports the need for clarification of an appropriate model for service delivery to meet the needs of special students within the regular classroom. Initial efforts in the integration of special students are promising, but the essential question of "who does what" (J. R. Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990, p.486) within the classroom remains. The literature provides

evidence that many others are struggling with problems associated with integration. Roles and responsibilities must be defined. The problem experienced in the writer's work setting was not unique.

The problem of role ambiguity is not limited to educational settings. Evidence of this problem is frequently noted in the literature in other domains. Role ambiguity is identified as a factor in job stress in the work of Nelson and Sutton (1990) and Steffy and Jones (1988). These authors studied stress in the business workplace and clearly identified role ambiguity as a contributory factor. They report unresolved role ambiguity may lead to increased stress, increased absenteeism and reduced worker productivity. Integration efforts would certainly be jeopardized by unresolved role ambiguity. This is a problem not to be dismissed lightly.

Other problems associated with integration are noted in the literature. Slavin et al. (1991) note that many special and regular educators are uncomfortable with the practice of mainstreaming. Since integration implies even greater involvement and collaboration, the stage is set for problems. Similarly, Keogh (1988) describes "widespread dissatisfaction with both the regular and special education systems" (p.22). General discontent compounds the problems encountered integrating special students into the regular classroom. Unmotivated professionals are not likely to invest effort in integration.

Myles and Simpson (1989) provide further evidence of similar problems. These authors assessed regular educators' modification preferences for mainstreaming students. They purport there is a need to determine appropriate methods to assist in the integration of special students. Support in the regular classroom is critical and was part of the problem experienced in the writer's work setting.

Perusal of the literature reveals several causes of the problem. Several authors note that integration efforts fail when there is not sufficient participation by regular education staff in the planning (Gelzheiser & Meyers, 1990; Johnson & Pugach, 1991; Myles & Simpson, 1989). Deficits in planning can be catastrophic in any undertaking. A poorly planned cake will not rise. A poorly planned lesson will not teach. Poorly planned integration will not succeed.

Essential elements were missing in the hasty planning for integration in the writer's work setting. Regular education staff members were consulted secondarily in the planning process, rather than actively engaged. Planning was initiated by special education staff members and reciprocated by regular education colleagues. The planning process may be thought of as receptive for regular education staff members, rather than expressive. The writer's contention that deficits in planning contributed to the problem situation was supported by the review of literature.

Misconceptions regarding behavior and expectations of special students are often a factor in the rejection of

integration efforts. Roberts, Pratt and Leach (1991) observed playground behavior of students with mild disabilities and no disabilities. Behavior in the two groups was similar; nonetheless, many teachers reject integration because they expect special students to exhibit disruptive behaviors. Similarly, Semmel, Abernathy, Butera and Lesar (1991) note that teacher expectations flavor regular educators' investment in integration. In the writer's work setting, this translated into poor preparation of staff and may be thought of as a further planning deficit. Regular educators were not made aware of specific educational and behavioral needs of the special students assigned to their classes. Poor preparation of staff is linked to the problem in the literature.

Another cause of the problem is teacher resistance to change. Bender (1987) and Self, Benning, Marston and Magnusson (1991) note that some teachers are resistant to change and mainstreaming. Innovation in education is personally challenging to many educators. Collaboration and shared responsibilities are seen by some as jeopardizing cherished autonomy in the classroom.

According to Lloyd, Crowley, Kohler and Strain (1988) and York, Vandercook, MacDonald, Heise-Neff and Caughey (1992) many teachers question the benefits of integrating special students, fearing the practice may be detrimental to regular students. Teachers were clearly overburdened in the writer's work setting. Budget deficits had contributed to

increased class sizes and additional classroom responsibilities for all, yet accountability standards remained stringent. Many teachers fear the inclusion of special students will further strain limited professional resources to the point that the program for regular students will be diminished. This fear contributes to problems with integration and is clearly noted in the literature.

Even when staff members believe in the philosophy of integration, there may be difficulties. The literature indicates both regular and special education staff members may feel ill prepared to collaborate on behalf of special students (Glomb & Morgan, 1991; Slavin et al., 1991). Many experienced, capable teachers in the writer's work setting had neither training in collaboration techniques nor training in special education. These vital components are only now beginning to be required in preservice training for all teachers.

Several domains were incorporated in the writer's review of the literature, including regular education, special education, sociology and business management. The literature reviewed supported the writer's causative analysis of the problem and evidenced the problem on a widespread basis.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and expectations were projected for this practicum. The goal of the writer was that all staff members involved in the integration of special students into the regular classroom would be able to clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities and understand the rationale for integrated services to meet the needs of all students. The expectation of the writer was that teachers would ultimately perceive greater support and after implementation, would be more comfortable with the integration of special students.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum. After implementation, it was expected that the situation in the writer's work setting would look quite different. There were several expected outcomes which would document change. First, teachers in the building would indicate increased acceptance and improved understanding of integration efforts on a survey administered to all staff in

June, 1992. Second, the number of questions about integration raised at staff meetings by teachers involved in the integration of special students would decrease during implementation and more positive comments would be made after implementation. Third, results of the integration assessment survey would be examined and discussed with building staff members, administrators and parents in order to target needed improvements. Fourth, teachers involved in the integration of special students into regular fourth grade classes would perceive improved support after implementation.

Measurement of Outcomes

It was the writer's intent to effect a positive change in the work setting. It is essential to assess change during and after implementation. Measurement of outcomes provides data with which to evaluate the success of the venture.

Evidence of increased acceptance and improved understanding of integration efforts would be indicated on a survey administered in June 1992. The survey titled Integration Assessment Survey (see Appendix A), was administered to all staff in January 1992. Results are described in Chapter II and recorded in Tables 1 and 2, as well as Appendix B. This survey would be administered again in June 1992, no less than two weeks prior to the close of

school. Staff would be allowed up to five days to complete the survey. This instrument was chosen so that a comparison of data might be made to evaluate progress of integration efforts. Increased acceptance and improved understanding could be documented by comparing the results of January administration to the results of the June administration.

The writer maintains that there are three objective indicators available for this construct using survey results. Overall scores on the survey indicate a general level of understanding and acceptance of integration efforts for the total staff. A second indicator of this construct is the mean score on item seven of the survey, "I feel more comfortable having special students in my class this year." A third indicator of this construct is found in the comments portion of the survey. Additionally, outcomes would be measured by feedback from staff and parents.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The problem in the writer's work setting was role ambiguity with regard to effective utilization of special education staff within the regular classroom and inadequate support for the regular teacher. Special education students and special education staff had been assigned to regular classrooms with no clear definition of staff roles and responsibilities to ensure successful integration.

Several staffing solutions which may facilitate integration of special students are suggested in the literature. Teacher collaboration, with shared planning and instructional responsibilities is noted as an effective plan for integrating special students by several authors. Skrtic (1991) reviews the history of special education and suggests teacher collaboration as a viable solution to demonstrated inadequacies in the field. Adamson, Cox and Schuller (1989) describe a resource program in Utah which involved extensive teacher collaboration. The program took four years to develop, but results were impressive. During the four

years. school enrollment increased by 37.9% while special education enrollment was reduced by 42%.

Two variations on the general theme of teacher collaboration are discussed in the work of several authors. Johnson and Pugach (1991) describe the effectiveness of prereferral interventions designed by teams of professionals. Collaborating with peers in structured problem solving facilitated the accomodation of students with mild learning and behavior problems in the regular classroom. The authors report that 86% of the classroom interventions planned by the peer teams were successful and that teachers demonstrated an increased understanding of problems in the process.

Team teaching is noted as a solution in the work of Deno, Maruyama, Espin and Cohen (1990). Team teaching can be an effective way to combine the professional background and expertise of regular and special educators to meet the needs of all students. Collaboration with peers in combination with direct instruction of students is included in the solution strategies of these authors.

Consultation support models are described by many authors as a solution for the integration of special students. Some consultation support models include direct instruction in the classroom, and others do not. Schulte, Osborne and McKinney (1990) attempted to determine the efficacy of consultation models with and without direct

instructional services from special education staff. Both consultation models were shown as effective alternatives to pull out resource room programs. Students receiving indirect services, consultation only, showed achievement gains equal to their peers in resource room programs. Students receiving direct services in the classroom from special education staff combined with consultation support, showed greater academic gains than their peers in pull out programs. It should be noted that the regular education teachers involved preferred the consultation in combination with direct services in the classroom.

Reigel (1983) recommended cooperative consultation between regular and special education staff members as an integral part of meeting the needs of special students as far back as 1983 and the recommendation is still voiced today (Idol & West, 1987; Skrtic, 1991) as a solution strategy. The essential competencies involved in the consultation process were the subject of a study conducted by West and Cannon (1988). These authors identified 47 specific skills essential for regular and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation. Though specific training in collaborative consultation techniques is recommended by these authors; the literature reviewed supports the use of collaborative consultation to facilitate the integration of special students.

Several instructional practices are clearly associated with successful integration of special students in the literature. Classroom ecology plays an important role. Cooperative learning and peer tutoring are noted as solution strategies used by effective educators. Cooperative learning is cited by Maring, Furman and Blum-Anderson (1985) as an appropriate vehicle for the inclusion of special students. Affleck, Madge, Adams and Lowenbraun (1988) note cooperative learning is commonly used in the Integrated Classroom Model (ICM), used in Washington state. The best practices observed in this model include: "a) clear directions/expectations, b) high reinforcement levels, c) grouping for instruction, d) direct, sequential instruction and e) individual attention" (p. 341).

Similarly, Magliocca and Robinson (1991) and Cooper and Speece (1990) note peer tutoring can be used to facilitate integration of special students. Self confidence and achievement can be influenced by classroom practices. To this end specific strategy instruction is recommended by other authors seeking effective integration of special students.

Harris and Pressley (1991) describe the potential benefits to be realized when cognitive strategy instruction is provided for students experiencing difficulties learning. Successful instructional scaffolding easily incorporated into regular classrooms can close the gap between

instruction and the cognitive level of the learner contributing to increased achievement. Pardo and Raphael (1991) report six comprehension strategies that could be used to enhance the successful integration of special students noting that "instruction in heterogeneous groups leads to higher achievement for all students" (p. 557). According to the literature, the classroom environment and instructional practices selected by teachers are important factors of the solutions noted by others. When designing solutions, the literature provides a wealth of information about ways other professionals have attempted to solve similar problems.

Other ideas were generated by the writer as solutions. Special education and regular education staff members could switch roles for several days to become more aware of each other's position. Mini-units could be prepared incorporating some of the solution strategies noted in the review of literature, which may serve as a model for effective integration methods in the regular classroom. Volunteers could be used to provide additional support in the regular classroom.

Clearly, there were any number of possible solution strategies which could be combined to solve the problem in the writer's work setting, but several restrictions limited the final choice. Budget constraints in the writer's school prohibited the use of any solution strategy requiring funds.

Training programs involving paid consultants were eliminated. Prereferral interventions were eliminated since they are a long term solution, more appropriate for a longer implementation. Similarly, the use of volunteers was eliminated as an option based on the writer's prediction that identification and training of volunteers would be too time consuming for the planned implementation period. The remaining solution strategies were deemed viable and elements were incorporated into a solution strategy developed by the writer.

Description of Solution Selected

In designing a solution strategy, the writer sought to combine ideas gleaned from the literature review, tailoring them to the work setting, the time frame and the staff involved. Teacher collaboration in various formats seemed to comprise the heart of integration. The selected solution strategy incorporated teacher collaboration in the form of shared planning and shared instruction. This solution strategy seemed viable in the writer's school.

The writer was prepared to try several things to better define roles and responsibilities and increase support in the regular classroom. First, the writer would present a synopsis of the solutions suggested in the literature on integration to staff involved during an in-service meeting.

The writer would collaborate with regular education staff members involved in this project during weekly planning meetings suggesting modifications which might be beneficial for special students and would model interventions as requested. Shared planning with regular education staff members would accomodate elements of consultation recommended in the literature.

Also, the writer would plan a two week mini-unit in social studies and provide direct instruction for one section of the fourth grade during the two weeks modeling interventions cited in the research on successful integration. The writer would collaboratively plan and team teach a mini-unit in math with a regular team member as well. The choice of shared instruction, as opposed to consultation only, would accomodate the inclusion of specific strategy instruction, cooperative learning techniques, and peer tutoring techniques all recommended in the literature. Modeling of these strategies might effectively increase the repertoire of methods available for regular educators working with special students, contributing to their comfort and perception of increased support.

The writer would switch roles and assume the responsibilities of a regular educator for a minimum of two full, consecutive days. The exploration of various collaborative roles during the implementation period should

provide the background and experience necessary to define roles and responsibilities for staff members involved with integration. The writer would prepare a document describing specific roles and responsibilities of staff members involved in integration at the conclusion of this practicum, incorporating solution strategies gleaned from the literature as desired by the team.

This plan was specifically tailored to address the problem in the writer's work setting. The writer would take an active leadership role in implementation. The effort would positively impact the problem because of several things. Philosophically, the staff members involved in the project believed in integration as beneficial for special needs students. The teachers involved were anxious to have support in the classroom. Also, the principal and school system administrators were supportive of integration efforts.

Report of Action Taken

During week one, the writer met with the staff involved. The implementation plan was reviewed with participants. The plan was well accepted by the special education director, principal and staff involved. Permission to undertake the project was granted. The staff involved were willing and seemed to have a good

understanding of the goals of the project and the implementation plan after discussion. They did not seem particularly motivated by the greater goal of improved integration, but seemed to accept the project simply as a requirement of the writer's graduate studies and were more than willing to participate on the basis of friendship.

The literature review planned by the writer regarding integration of special education students and staff was completed. The information on successful practices in other settings, cooperative learning, team teaching, and collaboration was helpful during the first weeks of implementation. Information from the literature review was shared informally with colleagues throughout implementation, as well as in the planned seminar during week four.

The writer began a journal in week one and made entries describing events and reactions during implementation. These notes, recorded generally three times per week, are the basis of this report and provide documentation of the implementation effort. The writer intended to record these notes on the word processor in the form of a running log or diary throughout implementation; however, a more fluid method of regular documentation evolved.

The writer was in the habit of keeping summary notes during meetings with parents, students, and colleagues. Using this established format the writer simply made an effort to record plans, comments, and reactions pertinent to

integration on these meeting notes and kept the dated notes in a folder. In addition, reactions and comments were noted on daily lesson plans. This format eliminated a good deal of rewriting. It provided more than ample documentation of integration efforts and reactions without duplication.

Collaborative planning was undertaken on a weekly basis during week one. The team involved had a single 45 minute joint planning period once each week. The students in all classes involved were with art, music and physical education teachers at the time. This period was used to plan activities which involved all three fourth grades, such as field trips, and to jointly review student progress and behavior, such as parent conferences and report cards. While this type of collaborative planning is an essential component of teaming; it provided little opportunity for the suggestion of specific classroom interventions which might contribute to the integration of special education students. As a result, classroom modifications and interventions were typically proposed and modeled "on the spur of the moment" in the classroom.

In order to foster collaboration, the writer made a concerted effort to meet with each team member at least once each week during individual planning times, before school, after school, and at lunch to suggest strategies or materials which might be beneficial for mixed ability groups.

During week two of implementation, the writer and another staff member had planned to switch roles. Week two was not a convenient time for this activity in terms of academic and personal commitments on the part of staff involved. It was; however, an opportune time to begin the instruction in social studies planned for weeks four and five as a unit of instruction was ending. This substitution of activities in the implementation plan was made. The writer spent an intensive weekend planning for instruction of a two week, mini-unit on the southwest states.

The writer provided direct instruction in social studies for one class of fourth graders for weeks two and three during implementation. Techniques of cooperative learning and peer tutoring were incorporated into the lessons. The regular text and workbooks were utilized as well as audiovisual materials, books and magazines, games and manipulatives made by the writer and students.

Daily lessons began with a brief review of material presented the previous day, usually in game format. This was followed by new instruction involving cooperative efforts among students, utilizing materials at different reading levels and vocabulary cards and charts. Audiovisual materials were used throughout instruction. Cooking projects and oral presentations by student teams were included. Each day the lesson was concluded by writing a summary of the day's work in student journals on the

southwest which they illustrated. At the end of the unit, each student had written a "book" in their own language about the southwest states and had this material and a set of vocabulary cards to study for the unit test provided by the textbook manufacturer. As a whole, the students did well on the test administered by the regular education teacher.

During instruction, the students appeared engaged in the material. Behavioral and academic difficulties were minimal and easily managed by a single instructor. The regular education staff member remained in the room some portion of each period as an observer, but took the opportunity to leave the classroom and attend to other things often. The different methods of instruction and materials were clearly noted by the regular teacher, accomplishing the writer's objective of modeling different strategies which are appropriate for mixed ability groups. The experience was reviewed with the rest of the fourth grade team upon completion.

As previously noted, during week four, an in-service presentation was given by the writer. Best practices for integration noted in the literature review were summarized for the four staff members involved in implementation as well as seven other staff members interested in this issue. The in-service session lasted approximately two hours and was provided as an option for staff members during release

time designated for professional development. The session began with a short summary of integration efforts to date by those staff members involved in the integration of special students. Descriptions of cooperative learning techniques used by the in-service participants were particularly well received. Some brainstorming by the group as to how to accomplish additional collaborative planning time prompted discussion about different teaming configurations for the next school year, but no immediate solution. Feedback from staff was positive. A similar workshop was requested by the principal for the beginning of the next school year and has been scheduled.

During week five of implementation, the writer switched roles for two full days with another staff member. The writer assumed all roles and responsibilities of the regular educator and the regular education teacher assumed all the roles and responsibilities of the special educator. It was an enlightening experience for both teachers, which they shared with other team members at the conclusion of the switch.

The students were enthusiastic. Reading and language instruction periods both mornings were productive in the regular classroom. A formal science assessment involving group experimentation with ramps and lead balls was begun day one of the experiment with the homeroom group. This assessment was concluded during the second day of

instruction. The morning experience with the homeroom group over the two day period was positive. The time was productive and things went smoothly in general.

The afternoon sessions both days involved science instruction periods for the two other fourth grade classes. A dissection of dandelions in groups and a drawing of the parts of the flower was planned. Customarily, the special education aide assists in science labs; however, due to a death in the family she was absent both days of the switch. A substitute aide was hired, but provided very little effective assistance for the writer as she was unfamiliar with the material, the students and procedures. The classes and instruction were difficult to manage. It rained and not enough dandelions were secured for dissection. As a result there were "idle hands" with sharp dissection tools poorly supervised as other groups needed instruction from a single teacher. The class was loud and not prepared for the class change on time. The second class in the afternoon was similarly poorly managed by the writer. The second day of the switch was used to complete what would have been accomplished by the regular science teacher in one session.

On the other side of the switch, the regular educator found it difficult to function in another teacher's classroom. She reported that she felt she didn't have a space of her own to work. The teacher was showing a filmstrip to the class. The switch special educator

reported that she knew some students were not engaged at all and others were flagging her down with questions apparently not able to process the information without the teacher stopping the filmstrip periodically. It was a frustrating experience to her.

Additionally, she had to contact some parents who were unresponsive. and test some students for annual reviews. She enjoyed administering the tests, but felt the students did not give their best effort in the testing situation and reported that it was difficult to set a testing time working around so many other schedules. She was unable to complete the testing and reports planned. She concluded special educators are "jugglers": that it wasn't the job for her.

At week six, the writer began to compile a mid-term progress report regarding implementation. The effort was basicly proceeding according to plan. Staff involved seemed to be learning and growing in their ability to meet the needs of all students in the regular classroom. The writer met with all staff involved in the project after school to gather feedback for the progress report. The writer planned and gathered materials for math instruction during this week also.

Team teaching in math commenced in week seven and continued through week eight. The writer and regular education staff member involved incorporated strategies and technologies appropriate for heterogeneous groups into

plans. The two staff members involved shared their experiences informally with other staff members involved in integration at lunch.

Homework notebooks were utilized in math classes for all students. Parents were informed that there would be math homework Monday through Thursday every week. The notebooks were instrumental in assisting those students with organizational difficulties as they were routinely required in class and at home.

At the beginning of every math class the writer dictated a math drill. This effectively quieted the classes at transition, focused their attention and provided time for homework recordkeeping as the regular education partner circulated to briefly check homework during the math dictation. A class popcorn party was the incentive behind 100% homework return for a period of five consecutive days. The students enthusiastically reminded each other of homework and were able to meet the objective of five consecutive days where everyone returned their homework. Since homework was scanned on a daily basis individually, it was possible to discreetly modify the amount of homework for students who struggled with paper and pencil tasks and to carefully monitor student progress.

The dictation was followed by a brief period of group instruction provided by the regular teacher. A conscious effort was made to include cooperative tasks using math

manipulatives. Homework for the night was recorded by each student before the whole class broke into smaller groups for further instruction.

Computers were utilized to individualize instruction for math. The seven computers available to the fourth grade were spread among the classrooms at the beginning of the team teaching in math. Upon investigation by the writer, they were sitting idle most of the day as large group instruction was typical in the fourth grade. They were collected and placed as a mini-computer lab in the classroom space formerly used by the writer for small group instruction. This space was adjacent to the math classroom with a connecting door. During a portion of each math period, seven students, a mix of regular education and special education students, worked in the mini-computer lab with the writer developing their computation and problem solving skills. A variety of software was utilized.

Peer tutoring strategies were modeled during week eight and periodically throughout the implementation period. The writer provided instruction for a class period in two of the three fourth grade classes for reading during this week. Activities included paired oral reading and peer coaching. After reading a short passage, each student acted as teacher to their peer asking two comprehension questions. The questions were recorded on cards and used in a whole class review game. Questions which required student predictions,

inferences, or comparisons were designated as higher point questions in the review game. Student "teachers" were encouraged to develop thoughtful questions in this fashion.

Feedback from students and staff was positive. The students seemed to enjoy the activities and demonstrated good reading comprehension, questioning skills, and patience working with their peers. Though classes were loud with many people speaking at once, all students were appropriately engaged with their peers using grade level materials.

Cooperative learning strategies were modeled in a similar fashion as opportunities arose throughout the implementation period and in science classes during week nine. Cooperative lessons with hands-on materials and supplementary paper and pencil tasks were conducted in two of the three fourth grade classes for at least one period during the week. Experiments required group participation by designating student roles and a structured summary where each group member was responsible for a portion of the written work.

Unaccustomed to the concept of group responsibility, some students were surprised and at first apparently unhappy when told at the beginning of the lesson that the grade recorded for the day would be the group grade. In the end all groups more than satisfactorily completed the tasks, succesfully cooperating and learning about being in a group.

During week nine the Integration Assessment Survey-Form II (Appendix D) was duplicated. It was distributed to all staff members to gather feedback regarding integration efforts. The writer also duplicated and distributed the Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix C) to the fourth grade team involved with integration. This questionnaire was designed to supplement the survey for project participants and to gather more specific feedback regarding the most desirable components of integration efforts to date.

The original plan had been to duplicate and distribute an Integration Assessment Survey identical to the one distributed in January 1992; however, in an unforeseen circumstance the assessment form was modified.

Shortly after implementation began, the director of special education contacted the writer regarding a systemwide assessment of integration efforts. The director expressed a desire to use the writer's Integration Assessment Survey for that purpose. Results from all schools in the system would be compiled and a report made to the school committee. The director met with the writer and the members of the assessment subcommittee who had conducted the original assessment. Appropriate methods for compiling and interpreting the data were discussed. It was mutually agreed that the form would be modified to address several other pertinent issues omitted in the original format. The minor changes reflected in form II add to the database while

not precluding a direct comparison to the original evaluation results. Since form II would be distributed to staff systemwide, in an effort to reduce confusion and eliminate unnecessary paperwork, this form was used for the June 1992 data gathering. Systemwide results are not available at present. Results in the writer's work setting were obtained in week 10 using the Integration Assessment Survey- Form II and are reported and discussed in Chapter V of this document.

At week 11, the project was coming to a close. The writer compiled data gathered and prepared a document defining specific roles and responsibilities of staff members involved in the integration project, incorporating strategies desired by the team. The writer presented this to the team. Feedback was positive. Several colleagues expressed the feeling that a statement of roles and responsibilities was long overdue. Minor wording revisions were suggested by the team. General consensus of the team was essential in this process if the collaboration model was to be functional in the regular classroom in the future.

During week 12, the final model for effective utilization of special education staff within the regular classroom was completed (see Appendix E). It defines roles and responsibilities of staff members involved in integration and suggests strategies and methods which may be used to promote the integration of special students ensuring

their success in the regular classroom. This model was presented to building staff at the weekly faculty meeting and a copy was sent to the special education director. The writer also began a comprehensive written report of the project week 12. Completion of the report constituted completion of the practicum.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem in the writer's work setting was role ambiguity with regard to effective utilization of special education staff within the regular classroom and inadequate support for the regular teacher. Special education students and special education staff had been assigned to regular classrooms without clear definition of staff roles and responsibilities to ensure successful integration.

The solution strategy selected involved exploration and modeling of various collaborative teaching arrangements and the development of a model for effective utilization of special education staff within the regular classroom. These efforts were designed to increase the successful integration of special education students by clarifying roles and responsibilities of staff, facilitating improved support in the regular classroom.

The first expected outcome was that teachers in the building would indicate increased acceptance and improved understanding of integration efforts on a survey administered to all staff in June 1992. A survey of staff

was conducted using the Integration Assessment Survey- Form II (Appendix D). Identical to data collection methods in the original survey, the writer calculated the mean score for each survey statement and collaborated with a group of parents to assess trends in comments written on the survey regarding strengths and weaknesses of integration efforts.

In June 1992 there were 21 surveys completed by staff members, representing an 80% return rate for the second administration. Results from the statement portion of the survey are reported in full in Appendix F. A comparison of the January and June data is included in Table 3. The increase in the mean score for 19 of 20 items on the original survey indicates increased acceptance and improved understanding of integration efforts. The rise in the mean score for item seven of the survey, "I feel more comfortable having special students in my class this year" provides additional documentation of improved acceptance of integration efforts to date. Despite increases however, it is notable that collaborative planning time and support in the regular classroom remain areas of relative concern.

Table 3

COMPARATIVE INTEGRATION SURVEY RESULTS

	STRONGLY DISAGREE ... STRONGLY AGREE	JAN. AVE.	JUNE AVE.
1. The integration of special students has been a positive change in the classroom this year.	1....2....3....4....5	3.58	4.11
2. There has been increased collaboration among regular and special needs staff members.	1....2....3....4....5	3.44	3.99
3. There has been sufficient planning time with special needs staff members.	1....2....3....4....5	1.88	2.10
4. Special students seem to be accepted by their peers.	1....2....3....4....5	4.08	4.41
5. I have learned a new approach or teaching strategy from a colleague this year.	1....2....3....4....5	3.09	4.16
6. I am more aware of the needs of my special students this year.	1....2....3....4....5	3.18	4.23
7. I feel more comfortable having special students in my class this year.	1....2....3....4....5	3.12	4.69
8. I have adequate contact with the parents of my special students.	1....2....3....4....5	3.38	3.75
9. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for classwork of special students as needed.	1....2....3....4....5	3.27	3.75
10. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for tests as needed.	1....2....3....4....5	3.22	3.64
11. Behavior problems have increased this year with integration of special students.	1....2....3....4....5	2.10	3.51
12. The general pace of instruction seems to be slower with integration of special students.	1....2....3....4....5	3.00	3.00
13. There is a lot more work for staff members who have special students.	1....2....3....4....5	3.61	4.03
14. There is adequate support for staff members with special students.	1....2....3....4....5	2.67	2.96
15. I would welcome special students into my class next year.	1....2....3....4....5	3.50	4.59
16. I would welcome special needs staff members into my class next year.	1....2....3....4....5	3.67	4.44
17. All students belong in the regular classroom with their peers.	1....2....3....4....5	3.52	3.90
18. Scheduling has been more difficult this year with the integration of special students.	1....2....3....4....5	2.57	3.44
19. My regular students have benefitted from integration of special needs staff members.	1....2....3....4....5	3.55	4.05
20. I have grown professionally as a result of collaboration with my colleagues this year.	1....2....3....4....5	3.50	4.28
21. I have used the SAT process to solve problems this year.	1....2....3....4....5		3.44
22. I would feel more comfortable working with special students with additional training.	1....2....3....4....5		4.20
23. There has been support from building administrators for integration.	1....2....3....4....5		3.20

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On the comments portion of the survey, these concerns were reinforced. The three most frequently cited commments on strengths and weaknesses are reported in Table 4. Comments are consistent with results from the initial portion of the survey. Similar to the original survey, comments on weaknesses well outnumbered the comments on strengths by approximately a two to one margin. There were 72 comments made noting weaknesses and only 31 noting strengths in integration efforts.

Table 4

Integration Assessment Results, June 1992:
Most Frequently Cited Comments

Strengths

# Times Cited	Comment
7	SPED and Non-SPED teacher collaboration benefits all students.
5	There are social benefits for SPED students in integrated classes.
4	SPED and Non-SPED teachers have shared learning strategies.

Weaknesses

# Times Cited	Comment
15	There are insufficient staff resources to provide support for integration.
15	Joint planning time between SPED and Non-SPED staff is insufficient.
8	There was a lack of administrative support implementing integration.

A more equitable balance of comments on strengths and weaknesses would have indicated further understanding and acceptance of this issue: nonetheless, a positive change is noted in two of the three indicators for this construct.

The objective was achieved. Teachers indicated increased acceptance and improved understanding of integration on the Integration Assessment Survey- Form II.

Just as the survey provided evidence of the problem and the opportunity to measure change, so did the discussion at staff meetings. The second expected outcome was that the number of questions about integration raised at staff meetings by teachers involved in the integration of special students would decrease during implementation and more positive comments would be made. Increased awareness of the rationale for integrated services and increased understanding of integration was evidenced at staff meetings documenting achievement of this objective. During implementation, there was a notable decrease in the number of questions pertaining to integration and positive comments were consistently voiced.

Two in-service days during the implementation period were devoted largely to integration. The discussion during staff meetings on these days was positive and suggestions were constructive. Comments such as, "These kids belong in the regular classroom" and "Integration is going well" were made indicating increased acceptance of integration practices. Even comments such as, "I think we should all share the burden" and "We are all willing to take the responsibility for <u>our</u> students" are indicative of an understanding of the rationale for integrated services. The

trend in comments made at staff meetings during implementation reflected a positive change.

A third expected outcome was the targeting of improvements for integration: an outgrowth of examining and discussing the results from the Integration Assessment Survey with staff, administrators and parents. This objective was achieved and was facilitated by the specific solicitation of suggestions for improvement included in form II. Results contributed by staff, administrators and parents are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Specific Suggestions for Improvement of Integration

- additional planning time
- additional training or workshops including:
  - appropriate modifications
  - problem solving
  - teaching strategies
  - SPED guidelines
  - cooperation/collaboration techniques
- adequate staff coverage
- time-out room for resolution of behavioral issues
- space for small group tutoring
- limit integration to 5 special students per class

Suggestions of this sort generated by careful assessment, discussion and collaboration enhances understanding and comfort with integration in the school community. Continued feedback on the integration process will be an essential element of continued success.

The fourth and last outcome expected was that teachers involved in the integration of special students into regular fourth grade classes would perceive improved support after implementation. Evidence of the perception of improved support was indicated by staff members involved with the writer in this endeavor. The affirmative response given by three of four staff members involved with the writer to the question, "Has there been an improvement in classroom support during the last ten weeks?" documents achievement of this objective.

The results reported provide both qualitative and quantitative documentation of a positive change in the writer's work setting, demonstrating growth in the area of the integration of special students. A final outgrowth of this practicum was the development of a model for effective utilization of special education staff in the regular classroom to support the integration of special students.

Discussion

Comprehensive integration of special education students represents change, dramatic change in the regular classroom. Effectively managing that change is both necessary and feasible. The vast body of research stemming from the Regular Education Initiative provides testament of a widespread problem and a desire to actively facilitate change. The research is a valuable resource essential to the development of plans for integration and integration efforts should be planned.

Careful, comprehensive planning is an essential component in successful integration efforts (Gelzheiser & Meyers, 1990; Johnson & Pugach, 1991). Similar to problems experienced in many organizations, a problem existed in the writer's work setting primarily due to planning deficits. The solution strategies implemented in this practicum were designed to assess integration efforts, explore integration methods, and plan to maximize future integration. The assessment activities laid a foundation for planning. The exploration activities provided perspective and insight for planning. The final model defining roles and responsibilities provides a plan for the future.

Assessment activities included two surveys of staff opinion and solicitation of informal feedback on a daily

basis. The survey of staff provided an invaluable benchmark at the onset. It stimulated thought and discussion about integration with each administration and serves as an effective vehicle for evaluation.

More immediate assessment though, is necessary during exploration to facilitate integration efforts. Investigators routinely utilize staff feedback; however, the feedback from students should not be dismissed in evaluating integration efforts. It provided a wonderful gauge of the effectiveness of various classroom interventions. It was interesting for the writer to note students', unconscious perhaps, simulation of their teacher's behavior, tone, and mannnerisms when playing the teacher role during peer tutoring. Students provide a mirror for teachers who want to see themselves.

Feedback from staff was not always encouraging. At the conclusion of demonstration teaching in social studies the regular education staff member's comment, "I'm jealous that you have the time to plan for that type of unit" is telling of her view that she somehow feels unable or is unwilling to invest effort in preparing similarly for instruction. It also seems indicative of the all too prevalent view that special education teachers do not share similar burdens of instruction that regular education colleagues endure.

It is the writer's belief that a separatist perspective regarding special education and regular education continues

to hinder the integration of special education students into the regular classroom. Attitudinal change among all teachers is an essential prerequisite to successful inclusion of special students into the mainstream of education.

The exploration of integration included a literature review, in-service presentation, and various collaborative efforts in planning and instruction. It is the writer's belief that the information shared informally during collaborative planning was more beneficial than the formal in-service presentation. The writer surmises the casual presentation of ideas and strategies is less overwhelming and challenging to colleagues.

Finding time to effectively plan with three other teachers on a regular basis was challenging during implementation. While collaborative planning increased, to generally 20 minutes each week with each teacher; adequate time for collaborative planning remains an issue. Calculation of "adequate" time for planning would seem to be a function of the involvement level of the students' special needs and the adaptability of staff. It is the writer's belief that additional collaborative planning time would be conducive to the integration of special students in this setting. This finding is widely supported in the research reviewed (Adamson, Cox, & Schuller, 1989; Skrtic, 1991).

The various exploration activities served to reinforce collaboration as an essential element in successful integration. Again this finding is well documented in the literature previously reviewed. The switching of roles for two days was instrumental in developing perspective and fostering collegiality. Though it was at times frustrating, both participants enjoyed the experience and reported to the team that it was a learning experience to "walk a mile in the shoes" of a colleague. Understanding the responsibilities, skills and particular strengths of another are a valuable component of collaborative efforts on the part of all students. The development of a model for future integration efforts would not have been possible without preliminary assessment and exploration.

The implications of this practicum are clear. There are a number of collaborative staff arrangements and cooperative efforts which may be combined to contribute to the successful integration of special education students into the regular classroom. The solutions require restructuring and rethinking our roles and responsibilities toward all students. The effort requires changes in attitude, changes in teaching practice, and administrative support.

In summary, by undertaking an assessment of integration efforts, exploration of collaborative integration methods, and development of a model for utilization of special

education staff in the regular classroom, the objectives of the practicum were met. It was demonstrated that collaborative efforts can positively impact staff perceptions regarding integration of special education students promoting increased acceptance and understanding. Integration efforts may best be seen as evolutionary, proceeding along a continuum. There are no quick fixes for the problems asociated with integration; however, purposeful well planned efforts may facilitate positive change in this worthy enterprise on behalf of all students. Positive change can be managed.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations which follow from the practicum reported. In general, there is a need for additional investigation into the most effective collaborative structures and methods which facilitate the successful integration of special students. In the writer's work setting:

1. integration of special education students should continue to be a goal.
2. evaluation of integration efforts should be regular and ongoing.

3. administrators should provide additional collaborative planning time to support integration efforts.

4. administrators should provide training opportunities in collaborative techniques, and

5. a plan must be developed to address the specific needs of behaviorally impaired students.

The writer intends to continue efforts in the work setting toward this end.

Dissemination

Collaboration is the key to successful integration of special education students. The problem is not unique to the writer's work setting. It is the writer's intent to share the information developed in the implementation of this practicum in an effort to collaboratively contribute to the success of other's efforts. The writer will summarize the work herein for presentation to colleagues in the local community and may submit this document in entirety for publication to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). It will also be available to professional colleagues through the Nova University practicum library in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTEGRATION ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Appendix A

Integration Assessment Survey

This survey is designed to gather feedback regarding the integration of special students into the regular classroom. This assessment is part of the ****** Building Action Plan for the 1991-1992 school year. It will be administered in January and again in June. Feedback will be used to assess current strengths and weaknesses and to plan for the 1992-1993 school year. We value the input of all staff members, whether or not you currently have special needs students in your class. Your perceptions relating to these issues are important. Thank you for your honest response in this matter.

****

DIRECTIONS: Please circle a response to each item indicating your agreement or disagreement with the statement.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1. The integration of special students has been a positive change in the classroom this year.	1	2	3	4	5
2. There has been increased collaboration among regular and special needs staff members.	1	2	3	4	5
3. There has been sufficient planning time with special needs staff members.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Special students seem to be accepted by their peers.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have learned a new approach or teaching strategy from a colleague this year.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am more aware of the needs of my special students this year.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel more comfortable having special students in my class this year.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I have adequate contact with the parents of my special students.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for classwork of special students as needed.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for tests as needed.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Behavior problems have increased this year with integration of special students.	1	2	3	4	5

(Appendix A continued)

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
12. The general pace of instruction seems to be slower with integration of special students.	1....2....3....4....5	
13. There is a lot more work for staff members who have special students.	1....2....3....4....5	
14. There is adequate support for staff members with special students.	1....2....3....4....5	
15. I would welcome special students into my class next year.	1....2....3....4....5	
16. I would welcome special needs staff members into my class next year.	1....2....3....4....5	
17. All students belong in the regular classroom with their peers.	1....2....3....4....5	
18. Scheduling has been more difficult this year with the integration of special students.	1....2....3....4....5	
19. My regular students have benefitted from integration of special needs staff members.	1....2....3....4....5	
20. I have grown professionally as a result of collaboration with my colleagues this year.	1....2....3....4....5	

Please comment below on the strengths and weaknesses of our integration efforts to date.

Strengths: _____

_____

_____

Weaknesses: _____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

INTEGRATION ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS, JANUARY 1992
REPORT OF COMMENTS

Appendix B

Integration Assessment Survey Results, January 1992
Report of Comments

Strengths

# Times Cited	Comment
4	There is increased help in the classroom.
4	There are social benefits for SPED students.
4	Integration is important.
3	The self concept of SPED group is improved.
3	SPED and Non-SPED teacher collaboration benefits all students.
3	SPED and Non-SPED teachers have shared learning strategies.
3	There are less disruptions with SPED students receiving instruction in the classroom, than when "pulled out".
2	Good role models in the Non-SPED group has resulted in improved SPED group behavior.
2	Non-SPED students have benefitted from integration of SPED students, through understanding and acceptance.
1	Student collaboration has benefitted SPED students academically.
1	SPED students have demonstrated academic growth.
1	Non-SPED students have benefitted from the integration of SPED staff in the classroom.
1	All students have assigned seats in the classroom suggesting all students belong.
32	Total comments regarding strengths

Note. SPED refers to special education.

(Appendix B continued)

Integration Assessment Survey Results, January 1992
Report of Comments

Weaknesses

# Times Cited	Comment
8	There are insufficient staff resources to provide support for integration.
6	Joint planning time between SPED staff and Non-SPED staff is insufficient.
6	Staff feel unprepared to work with SPED students.
4	The pace of the class is slowed by inclusion of SPED students.
4	More teacher collaboration is needed.
4	Staff roles and responsibilities are not defined.
3	There is no mechanism for dealing with behavior problems that are persistent.
3	Current integration processes need to be assessed.
3	SPED students in the classroom appear frustrated.
3	Integration is difficult when teachers with different philosophies and strategies are teamed.
3	Integration was not piloted sufficiently in our school.
3	There was a lack of administrative support implementing this program.
3	Integration has contributed to discouragement and frustration among teachers.
2	There is no time to challenge Non-SPED students.
2	There is nothing being done to identify gifted students or to meet their special needs.
1	Keeping track of assignments when handed in at different times is a problem.
58	Total comments regarding weaknesses

Note. SPED refers to special education.

APPENDIX C

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix C

Teacher Questionnaire

Please respond to the following:

1. Describe the most beneficial components of your collaboration with special education staff members.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What suggestions do you have for the improvement of integration in this school?

_____

_____

_____

3. Would you like additional training pertaining to the needs of special students? ____ yes ____ no

4. Has there been an improvement in classroom support during the last ten weeks? ____ yes ____ no

5. Do you understand the rationale for integrated services for special students? ____ yes ____ no

6. Do you feel comfortable teaching students with mixed abilities? ____ yes ____ no

7. Do you have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of teachers involved with integration? ____ yes ____ no

APPENDIX D

INTEGRATION ASSESSMENT SURVEY- FORM II

Appendix D

INTEGRATION ASSESSMENT SURVEY- FORM II

This survey is designed to gather feedback regarding the integration of special students into the regular classroom. Feedback will be used to assess current strengths and weaknesses and to plan for the 1992-1993 school year. We value the input of all staff members, whether or not you currently have special needs students in your class. Your perceptions relating to these issues are important. Thank you for your honest response in this matter.

****

DIRECTIONS: Please circle a response to each item indicating your agreement or disagreement with the statement.

	STRONGLY DISAGREE				STRONGLY AGREE
1. The integration of special students has been a positive change in the classroom this year.	1	2	3	4	5
2. There has been increased collaboration among regular and special needs staff members.	1	2	3	4	5
3. There has been sufficient planning time with special needs staff members.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Special students seem to be accepted by their peers.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I have learned a new approach or teaching strategy from a colleague this year.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am more aware of the needs of my special students this year.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I feel more comfortable having special students in my class this year.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I have adequate contact with the parents of my special students.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for classwork of special students as needed.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for tests as needed.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Behavior problems have increased this year with integration of special students.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The general pace of instruction seems to be slower with integration of special students.	1	2	3	4	5
13. There is a lot more work for staff members who have special students.	1	2	3	4	5
14. There is adequate support for staff members with special students from SPED staff.	1	2	3	4	5

(Appendix D continued)

15. I would welcome special students into my class next year. 1....2....3....4....5

16. I would welcome special needs staff members into my class next year. 1....2....3....4....5

17. All students belong in the regular classroom with their peers. 1....2....3....4....5

18. Scheduling has been more difficult this year with the integration of special students. 1....2....3....4....5

19. My regular students have benefitted from integration of special needs staff members. 1....2....3....4....5

20. I have grown professionally as a result of collaboration with my colleagues this year. 1....2....3....4....5

21. I have used the SAT process to solve problems this year. 1....2....3....4....5

22. I would feel more comfortable working with special students with additional training. 1....2....3....4....5

23. There has been support from building administrators for integration. 1....2....3....4....5

Please respond to the following.

A. A maximum number of special students appropriately integrated into a class is _____.

B. What suggestions can you make for improvement in integration efforts in your school? _____

_____

_____

Please comment below on the strengths and weaknesses of our integration efforts to date.

Strengths:_____

_____

_____

Weaknesses:_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM

Appendix E

A MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Premise: All children are capable learners.
All professional staff members share the responsibility for maximizing every student's potential.

Special Education Staff members will:

- provide a detailed description of the learning style, strengths and weaknesses, and current performance levels of special students for each cooperating teacher, including music, art, and physical education

- summarize the specific requirements noted in each Individual Education Plan (IEP) pertaining to:
  - student goals and objectives
  - testing modifications
  - grading practices
  - behavior/discipline
  - preferential seating
  - medical issues
  - classroom modifications

- collaborate to provide appropriate instruction and modifications for special students, mutually acceptable to both teachers

- demonstrate instructional methods appropriate for mixed ability groups as needed, including:
  - team teaching
  - cooperative learning
  - peer tutoring

- actively plan with colleagues for inclusion of special students

- act as a resource to colleagues in designing classroom management systems for heterogeneous groups

- monitor the progress of special students

- document and complete necessary special education records

- conduct assessments for annual reviews and 3 year reevaluations

- schedule and chair TEAM meetings at a time mutually acceptable for all parties involved and provide written reminders

- inform cooperating teachers of all communication with parents

- participate in regular parent conferences

(Appendix E continued)

Regular Education Staff members will:

- collaborate to provide appropriate instruction and modifications for special students, mutually acceptable to both teachers
- investigate new instructional methods and strategies which may promote clarity of instruction to accomodate diverse learning styles
- utilize instructional methods which may facilitate learning in mixed ability groups, including: team teaching
  cooperative learning
  peer tutoring
- actively plan with colleagues for inclusion of special students
- explore and experiment with classroom management techniques appropriate for heterogeneous groups
- assist in monitoring the progress of special students
- participate in TEAM meetings to review the progress of special students and contribute to the drafting of new IEPs
- inform cooperating teachers of all communication with parents

Administrative Staff members will:

- actively support collaborative efforts among staff members
- provide regular joint planning time for cooperating teachers
- promote the prereferral problem solving process
- provide opportunities for training in collaborative techniques and innovative teaching methods as desired
- foster a climate of collegiality and open communication

APPENDIX F

INTEGRATION ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS, JUNE 1992

Appendix F

INTEGRATION ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS, JUNE 1992

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	AVERAGE SCORE
1. The integration of special students has been a positive change in the classroom this year.	1....2....3....4*...5		4.11
2. There has been increased collaboration among regular and special needs staff members.	1....2....3....*....5		3.99
3. There has been sufficient planning time with special needs staff members.	1....2*...3....4....5		2.10
4. Special students seem to be accepted by their peers.	1....2....3....4.*..5		4.41
5. I have learned a new approach or teaching strategy from a colleague this year.	1....2....3....4*...5		4.16
6. I am more aware of the needs of my special students this year.	1....2....3....4*...5		4.23
7. I feel more comfortable having special students in my class this year.	1....2....3....4..*.5		4.69
8. I have adequate contact with the parents of my special students.	1....2....3...*4....5		3.75
9. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for classwork of special students as needed.	1....2....3...*4....5		3.75
10. Special needs staff members have provided modifications for tests as needed.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.64
11. Behavior problems have increased this year with integration of special students.	1....2....3..*.4....5		3.51
12. The general pace of instruction seems to be slower with integration of special students.	1....2....*....4....5		3.00
13. There is a lot more work for staff members who have special students.	1....2....3....*....5		4.03
14. There is adequate support for staff members with special students.	1....2....*....4....5		2.96
15. I would welcome special students into my class next year.	1....2....3....4..*.5		4.59
16. I would welcome special needs staff members into my class next year.	1....2....3....4.*..5		4.44
17. All students belong in the regular classroom with their peers.	1....2....3...*4....5		3.90
18. Scheduling has been more difficult this year with the integration of special students.	1....2....3.*..4....5		3.44
19. My regular students have benefitted from integration of special needs staff members.	1....2....3....*....5		4.05
20. I have grown professionally as a result of collaboration with my colleagues this year.	1....2....3....4*...5		4.28
21. I have used the SAT process to solve problems this year.	1....2....3.*..4....5		3.44
22. I would feel more comfortable working with special students with additional training.	1....2....3....4*...5		4.20
23. There has been support from building administrators for integration.	1....2....3*...4....5		3.20